



**21st Theater Sustainment Command
16th Sustainment Brigade
Public Affairs Office**

Warner Barracks,
Bamberg, Germany
DSN 469-7117
Commercial 0951-300-7117
16sbpao@eur.army.mil

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16th Sust. Bde. brings taste of home to Soldiers for Thanksgiving

By Spc. Kevin Alex
16th Sust. Bde. Public Affairs

BAMBERG, Germany — Spending the holidays away from family was made just a little bit easier for Soldiers who got to have a little taste of home this Thanksgiving.

It is tradition in the Army for the unit leadership to come in on Thanksgiving Day to serve dinner to the troops, and that's just what the command team of the 16th Sustainment Brigade did here at Warner Barracks Nov. 25.

"It is a way to honor the Soldiers," said Col. Keith Sledd, the commander of the 16th Sust. Bde. "The Soldiers serve the nation, the Army and our country every day, and on Thanksgiving it's our turn to come in and serve them as a sign of respect and thank them for their service."

"This is the time for them to sit back and let us show our appreciation for them," said Command Sgt. Maj. Ismael Rodriguez, the 16th Sust. Bde. command sergeant major.

"I'm a little selfish," added Rodriguez. "I get so much pleasure out of serving the Soldiers and telling them face to face, 'thank you for what you do and happy

Thanksgiving to you and your family' and to see their smiles. It's that sense of satisfaction that brings me to do this every year."

Brigade officers, sergeants major, first sergeants and other special guests came by to show their support and serve the troops who serve their country every day.

"It's an honor to spend Thanksgiving here," said Spc. Michael Freas Jr., a human resource specialist for the 7th Warrior Training Brigade, 7th Civil Support Command from Grafenwoehr and the 2010 Warrior of the Year for the 21st Theatre Sustainment Command who helped serve Thanksgiving meals. "The Army is one big family so it just feels right eating Thanksgiving dinner with other Soldiers."

Brig. Gen. Jimmie Wells, the commanding general of the 7th Civil Support Command and deputy commanding general of the 21st TSC, also stopped by to lend a hand with the meal and presented a plaque of recognition to Ray's Diner on behalf of 21st TSC.

Not only is there a feast prepared for the Soldiers, but the cooks have also prepared edible decorations that embody the holiday. The cooks started preparing everything at 7 p.m. the night before.

The tables at Ray's Diner were adorned with multiple scenes of edible decorations including a farmhouse, log house, a tree and a valley with a waterfall.

"The work that was put into this is amazing," said Rodriguez. "These Soldiers don't go through any formal schools to come up with these displays. These are their ideas that have been put together with their natural talents, and you can see the pride in their faces."

"The cooks are the ones who put in all their time doing all this prep, both with the food that they serve on the line and how they decorate," said Sledd. "The cooks get to do some work that improves their skills, and it is kind of nice for everyone who comes in to eat."

“I feel pretty good helping out the Soldiers when they are away from their Families during the holidays,” said Spc. Mark Dyer, a food service specialist with the 16th Sust. Bde. “It makes them a little more comfortable and gives them that home feeling.”

“I feel blessed to be here and be a part of something so important,” said Spc. Gary Ray Gonzales, a food service specialist with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 16th Special Troops Battalion, 16th Sust. Bde.

“The Army is your family everywhere you go so on Thanksgiving it is nice to spend the holiday with our Army family,” said Sledd. “Happy Thanksgiving to all the Soldiers in the 16th Sust. Bde. as well as the Bamberg community and all the other communities where we have 16th Sust. Bde. Soldiers.”



Col. Keith Sledd, the 16th Sustainment Brigade commander, presents the Army Achievement Medal to Staff Sgt. Jason Coy, a food service specialist with the 16th Sust. Bde., for his outstanding work in preparing the Thanksgiving feast at Ray's Diner Consolidated Dining Facility on Warner Barracks Nov. 25. (Photo by Spc. Kevin Alex, 16th Sust. Bde. Public Affairs)



Brig. Gen. Jimmie Wells, the commanding general of the 7th Civil Support Command and deputy commanding general of the 21st Theater Sustainment Command, serves Thanksgiving dinner to Soldiers at Ray's Diner Consolidated Dining Facility on Warner Barracks Nov. 25. (Photo by Spc. Kevin Alex, 16th Sust. Bde. Public Affairs)



Staff Sgt. Jason Coy, a food service specialist with the 16th Sustainment Brigade, shows Col. Keith Sledd, the 16th Sust. Bde. commander, and Command Sgt. Maj. Ismael Rodriguez, the 16th Sust. Bde. command sergeant major, the edible Thanksgiving table decorations made by the Soldiers who work at Ray's Diner Consolidated Dining Facility on Warner Barracks Nov. 25. (Photo by Spc. Kevin Alex, 16th Sust. Bde. Public Affairs)